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ABSTRACT

This paper presents results of three experiments that examined Japanese English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners' perception and production of to whom and how politely one should speak and what expressions are appropriate for whom in American English. Ratings were made on pictures of various types of people (teacher, professor, policeman, classmate) presented to subjects. Subjects were expected to change the level of politeness, in both American English and Japanese, depending on who the addressee was, especially as the two languages differ in how the speaker weighs factors such as age and status of the addressee and the speaker's familiarity in relation to others. Differences between the learners and native speakers seemed to be due to negative transfer, especially in terms of the age of the addressee; other differences may be attributed to various possible sources. Results indicate that the effects of second language (L2) proficiency were not always as expected. For example, advanced learners were not always closer to the native speaker than the intermediate learners in their judgement, suggesting not much difference between advanced and intermediate learners in levels of pragmatic competence. (Contains 11 references.) (Author/NAV)

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JUDGMENTS OF POLITENESS IN L2 ACQUISITION

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Abstract: This paper examines Japanese ESL learners' perception and production of to whom and how politely one should speak and what expressions are appropriate to whom in American English. Speakers are expected to change the level of politeness, in both American English and Japanese, depending who the addressee is, but the two languages are different in how the speaker weighs factors such as age and status of the addressee and the speaker's familiarity to the in relation to others. Some of the differences between the learners and native speakers seem to be due to negative transfer, especially in terms of the age of the addressee, however others could be attributed to various possible sources as developmental and so on.

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Introduction

This study will report three experiments that explore Japanese ESL learners' perception and production of politeness, with the focus on to whom and how politely learners think they should speak in American English. Politeness has been studied by many researchers as a universal phenomenon in human languages. It has been reported that although there are differences between cultures or languages, all languages have ways to realize politeness which keep conflicts between interlocutors low and maintain, or even enhance, smooth human relationships. Brown and Levinson (1987) compare politeness to a 'formal diplomatic protocol' (p. 2), claiming that both aim at enabling communication between groups of 'potentially aggressive parties' (p. 2). According to them, humans universally possess a desire for two kinds of face: 'negative face' and 'positive face'. The definition of each face is given as below;

> Negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition
>
> Positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (p. 61).

Brown and Levinson claim that face could be 'lost' or 'threatened' easily in interaction with others. Some acts are said to be inherently face-threatening. For instance, requesting is an intrinsic face threatening act (FTA) to the addressee's negative face, since it impedes the addressee's freedom to decide future actions; the addressee is pressured to do or not to do the act which he/she would not do or would do, respectively, if the speaker did not make the request.

Brown and Levinson (1987) name three factors that determine the proper level of politeness: the Power of each interactant over the other (P), the Distance between the interactants or familiarity with each other (D), and the Ranking of the severity of face-threat created by the act (R) (p. 15). They suggest that the speaker calculates the proper level of politeness for the situation by putting these three factors into the following formula:

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Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics, Volume 21, 1996, pp. 39-56

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FTA= D(S,H) + P(S,H) + Rx (S: speaker, H: hearer)

Brown and Levinson's account for politeness mainly concerns the generative aspect of politeness, which aims at examining the politeness phenomenon at the interpersonal level. Their theory is widely accepted by various disciplines concerning politeness. However, some researchers are not completely satisfied with it because it is thought too Western-oriented; in some cultures, people recognize themselves more as members of society rather than as independent individuals. Thus, politeness should be captured not only as a phenomenon that occurs between individuals involved in an interaction but it also has to be analyzed in terms of society (Hill et al. 1986; Matsumoto 1988, 1989; Ide 1989). From this standpoint, Hill et al. (1986) propose the distinction of *Wakimae* or 'Discernment' and 'Volition'. Wakimae or 'Discernment' consists of socially constructed rules that determine how one should both verbally and non-verbally behave respecting factors such as the addressee and situation:

> In this aspect of politeness, which we will call Discernment, the speaker can be considered to submit passively to the requirements of the system. That is, once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behavior is essentially automatic (p. 348).

Ide (1989) states that Discernment is sociopragmatically as well as grammatically obligatory in certain situations. It is realized by using honorifics, pronouns, speech formulas and so forth (p. 232). Japanese honorifics are strongly related to this aspect of politeness. On the other hand, Volition is not as restricted as Discernment; the speaker can choose the expression more in the way he/she feels, considering his/her own intention. Use of strategies such as 'seek agreement', 'joke', and 'minimize the imposition' are the examples of its realization. Hill et al. (1986) examine Discernment in American English and Japanese and prove that Discernment exists in both languages. They suggest that the difference between the two languages is that Japanese is more Discernment-oriented while American English is more Volition-oriented.

For the purpose of this study, I will adopt the distinction of Discernment and Volition and examine how Japanese ESL learners perceive Discernment in American English and how they realize it in their speech. To second language (L2) learners, the concept of speaking politely is itself nothing new from their first language (L1) experience. However, several studies report that speaking politely presents a major challenge to L2 learners, and that even advanced learners sometimes fail in politeness realization (e.g. Eisenstein and Bodman 1986) due to insufficient learning of pragmatic rules and the lack of linguistic repertoire to realize the intended effect. In this study, I am interested in how Japanese ESL learners may be influenced by their L1's orientation toward Discernment in learning a Volition-oriented L2. Experiment 1 will explore to whom and how politely Japanese ESL learners consider they should speak, and how different it is from the way native speakers of American English speak. Also, the influence of the learners' native language will be examined. Experiment 2 will investigate how similar and how different Japanese ESL learners and native speakers of American English are in the way they perceive the politeness of certain request expressions, along with the mapping of them onto the context: that is, which expressions are appropriate to whom. Experiment 3 will examine the realization of politeness in requests addressed to different addressees. Japanese ESL learners and native speakers' use of linguistic forms will be compared, the reference to the results of Experiments 1 and 2. By having both perception and production tasks, this study attempts to detect what types of the learners' failure in politeness are due to their pragmatic rules and what types are due to their limitation of grammatical competence in realizing their intended politeness.

The subjects in this study are all students of the University of Kansas, and they agreed to participate in the experiments voluntarily. There are two groups of Japanese ESL learners involved in this study, and they differ in the level of English proficiency. One of the groups consists of the subjects who are not enrolled in any ESL courses. It means that:

1. They have TOEFL scores higher than 570, with the minimum of 57 in each sections, and Writing test score higher than 5.0, or
2. They have passed a diagnosis test the university's ESL institute arranged to determine whether the student's language proficiency is high enough to enroll in regular classes.

They will be called Advanced Japanese ESL learners or JA in this study. The other group consists of subjects who are taking one or more ESL courses. They will be called Intermediate Japanese ESL learners or JI.

Experiment 1

Purposes of the Experiment The aim of this experiment is to examine Japanese ESL learners' perception of to whom and how politely one should speak in American English. Such perception is supposed to be based on their ideas of Discernment in American English: whether it exists, what factor is more valued than others in determining the Discernment in a certain relationship and so on. This experiment is especially interested in the influences of the addressee's age and familiarity to the addressee in determining the level of politeness. The age of the addressee is often said to be a very important factor in Japanese Discernment. In this experiment, I am interested in how Japanese ESL learners perceive the role of the age factor in American English, and how it differs from that of native speakers and from that of native speakers of Japanese.

Subjects Four groups of 18 people participated in this experiment as subjects. The first group consisted of native speakers of American English (hereafter, AE). Their age ranged form 19 to 28, and the average was 22 years old. They were mainly from the Midwest, however, four of them were from the South and one was from the West Coast. The second group was Japanese advanced ESL learners (JA). Their age ranged from 20 to 28, with the average being 24.1 years of age. The average length of stay in the United States was 2.2 years. The subjects in the third group was Japanese intermediate English learners (JI). They were from 19 to 29 years old, and the average was 22.6 years old. Their average length of stay in the United States was 1 year. The fourth group consisted of native speakers of Japanese (JJ). Their ages varied from 19 to 30 years old . The average was 23.9 years old. All groups consisted of 9 male and 9 female subjects.

Procedure[1] The subjects were given 16 cards, each of which had a brief description of a person (e.g. professor, classmate and police officer) in a situation they would encounter in their daily life. They were asked to rate the situations based on their judgment how as to politely they should speak. To begin, the subjects ranked the situations in graded order according to thought they think they should speak politely. Then, they rated them along a 10-point scale, 10 meaning most polite and 1 the least (however 1 did not necessarily mean that they could be rude or mean to the person). They were told that they could use the same point as many times as they wanted in addition to not having to use all the points from 10 to 1. AE, JI and JA went through the procedure in English and JJ in Japanese.

Material Below is the list of people the subjects rated based on how politely they would speak. Each situation involves very low, if any, face threat for the speaker. The influence of the audience was kept minimum in each case.

a. A middle-aged clerk at a department store.
b. The landlady/landlord of the apartment where you want to rent a room.

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c. A middle-aged stranger who is asking you for directions.
d. A classmate of yours with whom you did a small project together before. You know that he/she is two years younger than you.
e. A middle-aged police officer who stoppec you on the highway to check if you are not drunk.
f. A high school student whom you do not know. You and him/her are waiting for a bus. He/she is asking you if you know when the next bus will come.
g. A middle-aged waiter/waitress at a small coffee shop. You do not know him/her personally.
h. The professor of a class you are currently taking. This is the first semester for you to take his/her class. You are asking him/her a question in his/her office
I. A classmate of yours with whom you did a small project before. You know that he/she is two years older than you.
j. Your close friend who is visiting you in your room.
k. Your younger brother/sister at home.
l. A classmate of yours who is of your age. You did a small project with him/her before.
m. A middle-aged clerk at a small candy shop. You do not know her personally.
n. Your older brother/sister at home.
o. A classmate of yours who is 15 years older than you. You did a small project with him/her before.
p. Your mother at home.

Each situation was given on a separate card. JJ used a Japanese version of the cards.

Data Analyses Below is the average scores of the sixteen situations rated by each group.[2]

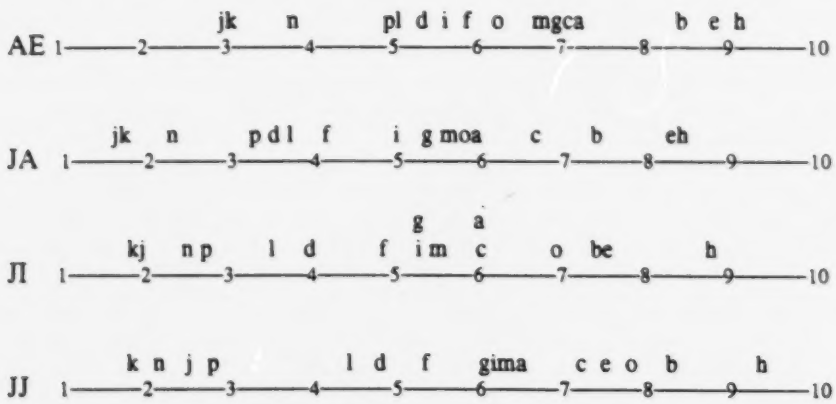
AE
jk n pl d i f o mgca b e h
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
JA
jk n p d l f i g moa c b eh
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
JI
g a
kj np l d f im c o be h
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
JJ
k n j p l d f gima c e o b h
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Figure 1
The average rating of the 16 situations

In Figure 1, all groups showed a similar tendency toward the ends of the scale. The subjects gave high ratings to the situations that involved addressees with authority over the speakers as in 'b' (landlady/landlord), 'e' (police officer), and 'p' (professor). These addressees were in positions which could affect the speakers' life by the jobs they do or the decisions they make. It seems that the subjects considered they would put more efforts on face preservation to people against whom face loss could prove more costly. On the other hand, their ratings were very low when the addressees were close to the speakers as in 'j' (friend), 'k' (younger brother/sister), 'n' (older brother/sister) and 'p' (mother).

The groups were proven to be different, however, when details were analyzed by the sign test[3]. One of the causes of such differences seems to be the way that each group perceived the power relationship between the speaker and addressee. In 'a' (department clerk), 'g' (waiter/waitress) and 'm' (candy shop clerk), the speaker was a customer to the addressee. When the three situations were compared with 'c' (stranger on the street), AE and JI's responses agreed. There was no significant difference among 'c' and the three situations. On the other hand, JA and JJ were the same in that they rated 'c' significantly higher than 'a', 'g' and 'm'. This result may indicate that JA and JJ considered that the speakers' role as customers gave them power over the addressees, and that it allowed them to speak less politely in 'a', 'g' and 'm' in comparison with 'c', where the addressee was a 'neutral' stranger.

In terms of 'e' (police officer), where the addressee had authority and power over the speaker, AE and JA were in accordance. They rated 'e' significantly higher than the other middle-aged stranger situations ('a': department clerk, 'c': stranger, 'g': waiter/waitress, and 'm': candy shop clerk) ($p<0.05$). Unlike AE and JA, JJ responded that 'e' required more politeness than the clerk-waiter/waitress situations ('a', 'm' and 'g'), but there was no significant difference to 'c'. JI's judgment was rather similar to JJ's; 'e' was rated politer than 'm' and 'g', but no significant difference was detected between 'e' and 'a', and 'e' and 'c'. It may be said that JJ did not perceive police officers as having as much authority as AE did. JI may have transferred this perception to their L2, but JA seems to have already adjusted their perception to the way the native speakers did.

In both Japanese and American English, the age of the addressee seems to be one of the determinants of the level of politeness, at least in some situations. In the comparison of 'c' (middle-aged) and 'f' (high school student) which involve strangers on the street as addressees, all groups rated 'c' significantly higher than 'f' ($p<0.05$). It is not clear in this comparison, however, whether this result was due to the addressees' relative age (they were older than the speaker), absolute age (they had reached a certain age to deserve to be spoken to politely), or both. The effects of addressees' absolute age is beyond the design of this experiment, but the subjects' sensitivity to the relative age of the addressee could be analyzed by the comparisons of the classmate situations. In the comparison of 'd' (classmate: 2 years younger), 'i' (classmate: 2 years older), 'l' (classmate: the same age) and 'o' (classmate: 15 years older), the subjects in all four groups rated 'o' significantly higher ($p<0.05$) than the other three classmate situations. The groups were different, however, in how much age difference was large enough to cause the difference in the politeness level. AE subjects made no significant difference among the 'd', 'i' and 'l', indicating that the difference of two years did not matter to them. On the other hand, JA, JI and JJ rated 'i' significantly higher than 'l'. When the addressee was younger than the speaker, the responses of the Japanese subjects did not completely agree to each other. In JI, rating of 'd' was significantly higher than that of 'l' ($p<0.05$), while the other Japanese groups, JA and JJ did not make any significant difference between them ($p<0.05$).

An interesting contrast appeared between AE and JJ in how high they rated 'o' in relation to the others. It can be seen in Figure 1 that JJ's rating of 'o' was quite high. Indeed, JJ never rated 'o' lower than any stranger situations. They rated 'o' as high as 'c' and 'e' and significantly higher than the clerk-waiter/waitress situations and 'f' (stranger: high school student) ($p<0.05$). On the other hand, AE's ratings to the strangers were always significantly higher or the same but never lower than those to acquaintance, regardless of the addressees' age. They rated 'o' significantly lower than 'a', 'c', 'f' and 'm', and the same as 'g' ($p<0.05$).

The responses of JA and JI were in between the two extremes of AE and JJ. In JI's judgment, 'o' was significantly politer than 'f', 'g' and 'm', and it was the same as 'a', and 'c'. In JA's case, 'o' was significantly politer than 'f', but there was not any significant difference between 'o' and 'a', 'c', 'g' and 'm'. Generally speaking, JA's responses were closer to AE than JI's in these cases; the four middle-aged stranger situations were rated as high as the 15 year-older classmate

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situation, while only two were rated the same as the classmate situation in JI. It would be fair to conclude that such a high rating of 'o' was transferred from the L1 of the subjects. Japanese seems to require its speakers to be especially polite in speaking to an acquaintance who is much older than him/her, and the ESL learners carried on the L1 rule to their L2. In relation to the familiarity factor, American English seems to value it more than Japanese. Regardless of the age of the addressee, and whether the addressee was serving to them or just a stranger on the street, the native speakers of American English responded that they would speak more politely to an addressee whom they did not know personally. On the other hand, the native speakers of Japanese were more influenced by age and the server-customer relationship with the addressee, and these factors could overwhelm the familiarity factor in the impact on the decision in the level of politeness. JA and JI were under the influence of such L1 rule, and this tendency was stronger in JI.

Experiment 2

Purposes of the Experiment This experiment is an attempt to examine how Japanese ESL learners perceive politeness levels of some expressions for request and to whom they think those expressions are appropriate. For request expressions, the focus will be especially on the perception of modals in the request forms.

Subjects Subjects were 54 university students from 19 to 31 years old. They were divided into 3 groups, AE, JA and JI, and each group consisted of 9 males and 9 females. AE, native speakers of American English, were mainly from the Midwest but included 1 from the East, and 2 from the West. The average of their age was 23.9 years old. The subjects in JA were advanced learners, whose average age was 24.8 years old. Their average length of stay in the United States was 2.8 years. JI consisted of intermediate learners. Their average age was 22.5 years old, and they had stayed in the United States for 1.1 years on average at the time of the experiment.

Procedure This experiment consisted of two parts. In Part 1, the subjects were given a list of expressions that could be used to ask for the salt, and they were asked to rate the politeness of each expression along a 10-point scale. To do this, they started with ranking the expressions from the most to the least polite and then rated the most polite 10 and least polite 1 respectively. After that, they rated the rest along the 10-point scale. They were allowed to use the same point as many times as needed. Also, they did not have to use all the points.

In Part 2, the subjects were given three situations with different addressees and asked which of the 9 expressions they could use in each situation. The three situations were as following:

1)You are dining at the university cafeteria with one of your professors and some other people. You are going to ask the professor to get you the salt. You are taking his/her class for the first time this semester, and you do not know him/her very well. Consider that you are dining with him/her not because you are close to him/her but because you know other people in the group well, and you happened to have a chance to have lunch with him/her.
2)You are dining at the university cafeteria with your close friend. You are going to ask him/her to get you the salt.
3)You are dining at a small coffee shop. You are going ask a waiter/waitress to get you the salt.

In either situation, the atmosphere is very casual.

The subjects were asked to choose not just the best ones but all expressions that would be appropriate. They could choose as many expressions as they wanted, and also they could choose

the same expressions to two or more situations. After making their choices, the subjects wrote down if there were any expressions they did not choose for reasons other than politeness.

Material Below is the list of the expressions the subjects rated. Each expressions were given on a separate card.

a. Could you get me the salt?
b. Would you get me the salt?
c. Will you get me the salt?
d. Would you mind getting me the salt?
e. I need the salt.
f. Can you get me the salt?
g. I'd appreciate it if you would get me the salt.
h. Get me the salt.
I. Can't you get me the salt?

Data Analyses

Part 1: Below are the averages of the points each group gave to the 9 utterances to request the salt[4].

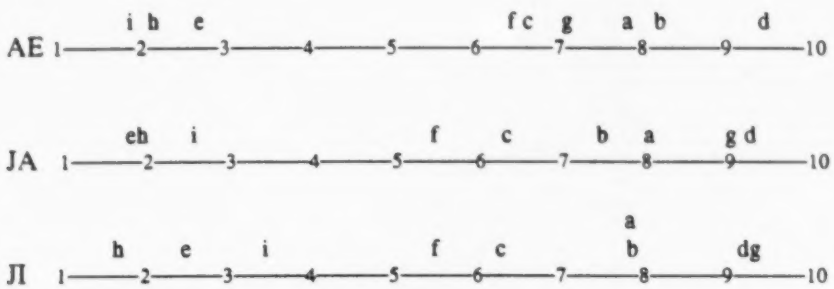

Figure 2
The average rating of the expressions for request

The distribution patterns of the 9 expressions on the scale were relatively similar among the three groups although some differences existed. All groups gave very high points to 'd' (would you mind---?); as a result of the sign test, it was found that 'd' was rated significantly higher than any other expression except for 'g' (I'd appreciate it ---.) in JA and JI, who rated 'g' as high as 'd'. In fact, 'g' seemed to be more complicated than the other expressions for the subjects to judge the level of politeness; many subjects especially those in AE took more time for the rating of 'g'. After a small moment of consideration, some decided to rate it relatively low, commenting that the expression was too polite for requesting the salt and thus sounded somehow sarcastic. It seems that requesting for the salt was a small favor for them, therefore the R (rank) of this situation did not match the expression, which created the impression that the expression was not so polite. Most of JA and JI rated 'g' high.

Next to 'd' were 'a' (could you ---) and 'b' (would you ---), and as a result of the sign test, 'a' and 'b' did not differ significantly in all groups ($p<0.05$). Expressions 'a' and 'b' were followed by 'c' (will you ---) and 'f' (can you ---), which were significantly lower than 'a' and 'b'. JA's judgment of 'c' and 'f' were different from AE and JI; JA judged 'c' significantly politer than 'f', but there was no significant difference in AE and JI's judgment of 'c' and 'f' ($p<0.05$). It is not

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known why the intermediate learners were closer to the native speakers than the advanced learners in the response about 'c' and 'f'.

In Figure 2, it is noticeable that there is a large gap between 'f' and the rest of the expressions below it in all groups; indeed, all groups rated 'e' (I need the salt), 'h' (Get me the salt) and 'i' (Can't you get me the salt?) significantly lower than the others located higher on the scale. These three expressions were rated the same in the level of politeness by AE and JA ($p<0.05$), but JI rated 'i' significantly higher than 'h'. There was no significant difference between 'e' and 'h' as well as 'e' and 'i'. There will be more discussion on this matter below.

In terms of the linguistic forms, requests with subjunctive forms ('a': could you ---?, 'b': would you ---?) were rated significantly higher than their non-subjunctive counterparts ('f': can you ---?, 'c': will you ---?) in all groups ($p<0.05$). In ESL acquisition, this rule might be learned relatively early. As for the comparison of can/could ('f'/ 'a') and will/would ('c'/ 'b'), there was no significant difference between 'f' and 'c' or 'a' and 'b' in AE and ($p<0.05$). However, JA did not differentiate 'c' and 'f' significantly but did so with 'a' and 'b' ($p<0.05$).

Data Analyses

Part 2: For each situation, two types of graphs are presented. One type shows the number of subjects who chose each of Expressions 'a' to 'i' for each addressee (Figures 3 to 5), and the other type shows the number of subjects who chose the expressions rated as each of the point 1 to 10 (Figures 6 to 8).

As can be observed in Figure 3 and Figure 6, the three groups generally agreed about the professor situation in that the subjects preferred the expressions that were rated relatively high and avoided those rated low in Part 1. In AE, 'd' (chosen by 89% of the subjects), 'a' (61%) and 'b'(56%) were the three most preferred expressions. As for the Japanese subjects, 'b' (78%), 'd' (72%) and 'a' (67%) for JAs, 'b' (89%), d (83%) then 'a' (72%) for JI, were the most preferred expressions. Also, 'e', 'h', and 'i', which were shown to be rated much lower than the others in Part 1, were not used at all by any one in any group in the this situation.

As can be seen in Figures 4 and 7, the friend situation showed more variation in the subjects' responses in comparison with the professor situation. The shapes of the lines are obviously different between Figure 6 and Figure 7. In the professor situation, the lines are more or less like a regressive line from the upper left corner to the lower right corner. However, in the friend situation, the lines tend to stay around the center. This is more obvious in JA and JI than AE; AE shows a regressive line even in the friend situation, but it is not as sharp as it is in the professor situation. This indicates that the friend situation may allow expressions of a wider range of politeness level. This tendency can be observed also in Figure 4. In the professor situation, only three out of the nine expressions ('a', 'b' and 'd') were chosen by more than half of the subjects in each group. However, in the friend situation, five in AE and JA and seven in JI were chosen by more than half.

In the waiter/waitress situation, the graphs showed more or less a regressive line from the upper left corner to the lower right corner as in the professor situation (Figure 8). This tendency seems to be particularly distinguishable in AE in comparison with the other two groups. The most preferred expression was 'a' (could you ---?) in all the three groups (AE 72%, JA 89% and JI 72%). Other expressions supported by more than half of the subjects are 'd' (61%) and 'b' (59%) in AE, 'c' (72%), 'f' (72%) and 'b' (61%) in JA and 'b' (61%) and 'f' (61%) in JI.

Now, let us move to the subjects' choice of the nine expressions: which one is appropriate to whom. The three groups showed similar shapes in the graphs for 'c', 'd', 'e', 'f' and 'h' (see Figures 11, 12, 13, 14, and 16) in that they all showed an increase of frequency at the friend

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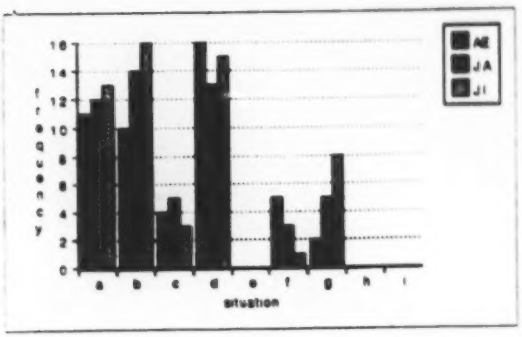

Figure 3
The frequency each expression was chosen for the professor situation

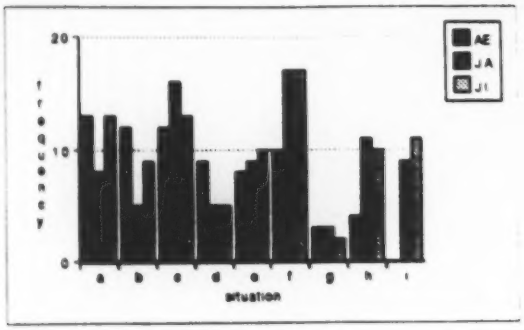

Figure 4
The frequency each expression was chosen for the friend situation

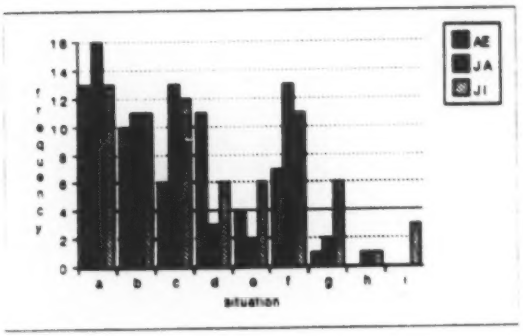

Figure 5
The frequency each expression was chosen for the waiter/waitress situation

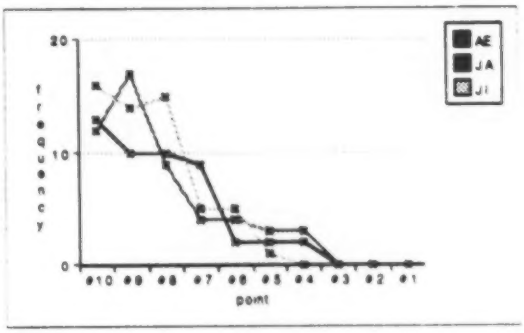

Figure 6
The frequency expressions rated as each point were chosen for the professor situation

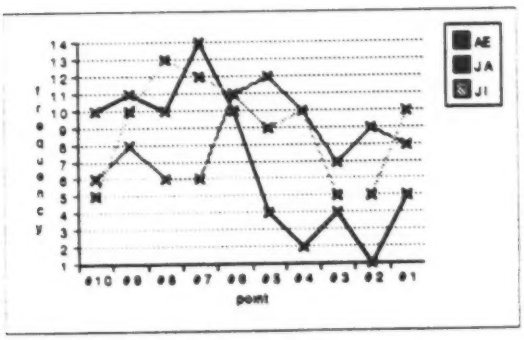

Figure 7
The frequency expressions rated as each point were chosen for the friend situation

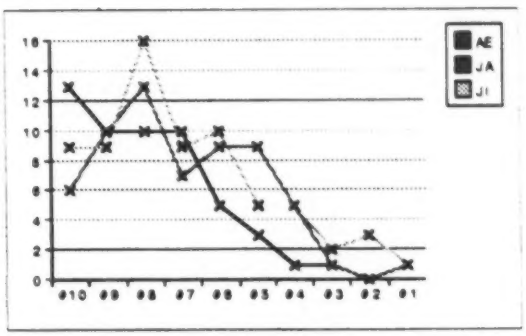

Figure 8
The frequency expressions rated as each point were chosen for the waiter/waitress situation

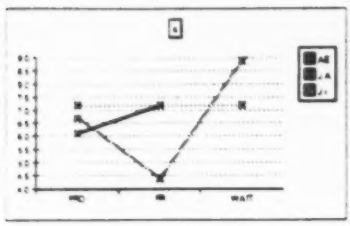

Figure 9

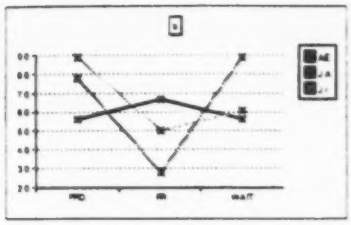

Figure 10

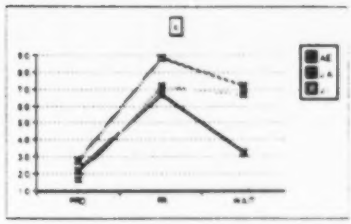

Figure 11

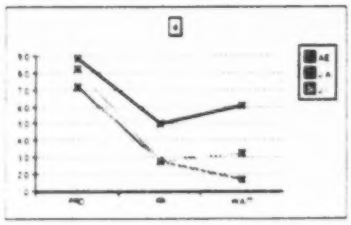

Figure 12

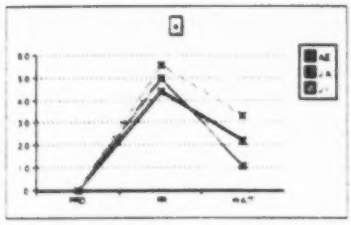

Figure 13

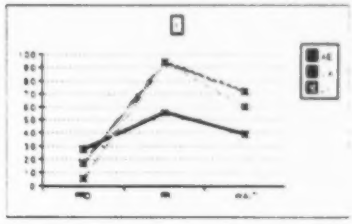

Figure 14

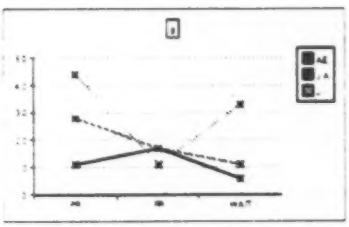

Figure 15

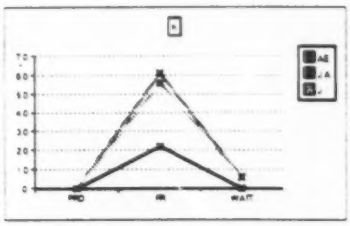

Figure 16

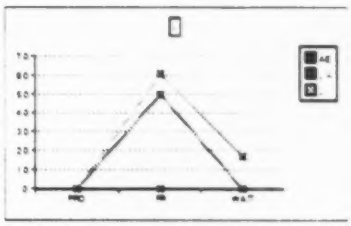

Figure 17

Figures 9 to17
The frequency the expression was chosen for each of the situation

situation in 'e', f', and 'h' and decrease at the friend situation in 'c'. However, the groups showed difference in the degree these expressions were preferred or disapproved to each of the addressee. As for 'f', Japanese subjects' preference for the expression was much higher than AE's for the friend situation (94%). Indeed, only one subject each from JA and JI did not choose it. This may be partly because of the prescriptive instructions native speakers received in the earlier stage of their life. To the question of whether there were any expressions they did not choose for reasons other than the level of politeness, two AE subjects answered that 'f' did not have the pragmatic force of requesting. According to them, since you know that your addressee is able to do the conduct, you should not ask if he/she 'can'. One of them added that she was told not to use the linguistic form for a request when she was a child. It is possible such instructions may have affected some of the native speakers' perception of the expression including of those who did not comment on it.

Expression 'h' was also preferred by Japanese subjects much more often than AE subjects for the friend situation. This expression seems to be not polite enough for use in the other situations, but two thirds of JA and JI considered that it was acceptable when used to friends. However, only one fifth of AE chose it even for the friend situation.

In some expressions, there were noticeable differences in the shapes of the graphs across the groups. In 'a' (Figure 9), JI did not show any difference depending on the situations. They probably perceived this expression as a standard or 'safe' request that they could rely on relatively freely regardless of the situation. In JA, on the other hand, less subjects chose 'a' in the friend situation than in the others perhaps because they considered it was too polite in the friend situation. The same tendency was observed in 'b' (Figure 10), which was agreed to by JI in this case. Considering the fact that 'b' was the second most preferred expressions among AE (67%), it would be fair to say its frequency in JA (28%) was remarkably low. As JA and JI's ratings of 'a' and 'b' were not particularly higher than AE's in Part 1, it could be said that this was because of the way JA and JI perceived the friend situation.

Expression 'g' was not chosen very often by any group (Figure 15) for the level of the politeness rated in Part 1 of this experiment. As discussed in the analyses of Part 1, some AE subjects seem to have rated 'g' lower because the expression was too polite for a small request, and as a result sounded sarcastic and less polite. JI's perception seems to be less influenced by such sociopragmatic effect; they had the tendency to rate it very high . There were other reasons 'g' was avoided. Three AE and one JA subjects wrote that it was too wordy. One AE and two JA subjects responded that it did not sound like something they would ever say. One JI subject translated it into Japanese and added that it sounded arrogant to her; that is, she seems to have consulted her L1 to handle an expression unfamiliar to her.

For 'i', 50% of JA and 61% of JI considered that they could say that to their close friends, but none of AE answered they could (Figure 17). Three of AE wrote that they did not choose it because the wording sounded strange or incorrect to them. In regard to the average rating, 'i' was the lowest of all in AE, although there was no significant difference among the three lowest, 'e', 'h', and 'i'. In JA and JI, the average of 'i' was higher than 'e' and 'h'. As a result of the sign test, 'i' was not significantly higher than the other two in JA, but JI's rating of 'i' was higher than that of 'h'. This may indicate that even though the result was not always significant, there may have been the tendency among JA and JI to perceived 'i' more polite than AE did. At the same time, as shown earlier, JA and JI seemed to allow very low politeness expressions in the friend situation, and this tendency may have worked together for the obtained result.

Experiment 3

Purposes of the Experiment This experiment aims at analyzing Japanese ESL learners' production of requests. It will examine how the learners differentiate the use of linguistic forms depending on

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who the addressee is. In relation to the other two experiments, this one is to investigate the gaps that exist between the perception and production of American English by Japanese ESL learners.

Subjects Subjects of the experiment were three groups of 15 people (7 male and 8 female). The groups were native speakers of American English (AE), advanced English learners of Japanese (JA) and intermediate English learners of Japanese (JI). The age of the subjects ranged from 19 to 31 in each group. Most of AE were from the Midwest, but there were three from the West and one from the South. The average age of AE was 22.9 years old. The average ages of JA and JI were 24.2 and 22.1 years old respectively. At the time of the experiment, the subjects in JA had stayed in the United States for 2.9 years and JI for 1.2 years on the average.

Procedure The subjects were asked to talk to a tape recorder imagining that they were leaving a message on an answering machine as prompted in the following situations:

> You are calling your _____ to cancel an appointment you have made for this afternoon. You wanted to meet him/her to pick up your paper, but since you cannot come today, you want him/her to leave it with your department secretary. Suppose this does not give _____ any extra trip to the department office or any considerable trouble.

_____ was either (a) your professor whose class you are taking for the first time, or (b) your close friend. Half of the subjects performed the task in the order of (a), (b) and the other half did in the order of (b), (a). The subjects were randomly assigned to one of the two orders. They were allowed to think about what they were going to say before the performance, since it would be common in a real situation.

Data Analyses Generally speaking, the subjects tended to rely on formulaic expressions rather than being creative in requesting. The expressions employed by the subjects can be roughly classified into the following five categories:

1. Interrogative (e.g. Could you ----?)
2. conditional (e.g. If you could ---, it would be ----.)
3. expression of personal desire (e.g. I want you to ---)
4. please + imperative (e.g. Please do it.)
5. I was (am) wondering if ---.

Tables 1 and 2 shows the frequency each group employed each type of the utterance to their professors and to their close friend respectively.

	AE	JA	JI
interrogative	3	10	11
conditional	5	1	0
personal desire	0	4	1
please+imperative	0	0	1
I was wondering ---	7	0	0
others	0	0	0

Table 1
The frequency each type of the expressions was used in the professor situation

	AE	JA	JI
interrogative	4	8	9
conditional	4	2	0
personal desire	1	3	2
please+imperative	1	2	3
I was wondering ---	1	0	0
others	5	0	1

Table 2
The frequency each type of the expressions were used in the friend situation

In the professor situation, seven out of 15 subjects in AE employed 'I was wondering ---', and it was the most common expression among AE subjects. To the contrary, none of Japanese subjects used it. It may suggest that the expression be not yet in their production repertoire even for advanced learners. If so, it could be said that the expression is acquired relatively late. Likewise, the use of conditionals was also common among AE, however, JI never used this type of utterance in either situation. This type of utterance may not have been acquired yet as a productive repertoire by JI. As for JA, it was used only twice in each situation.

The type of utterance most common among the Japanese ESL learners was the interrogative; two thirds of JA and JI chose to use this type of linguistic form in the professor situation, and it was also very popular in the friend situation. On the other hand, only one fifth of AE chose it in the professor situation, and the tendency also existed in the friend situation. This result may be due to the influence of classroom instructions. It is possible that interrogative formulae were the most accessible expressions for the ESL learners in requesting because they are often the most practiced type of linguistic structure for a request in the classroom.

In the professor situation, none of AE used expressions of 'personal desire'(Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1977). This type of expression was not common among the Japanese subjects either, but there were three JA subjects and one JI subject who chose it. The other expression never used by AE in the professor situation is 'please + imperative', and this was also the case in JA. However, three of JI employed it. In Experiment 1, it was shown that Japanese ESL learners seemed to believe that speaking to their professors required a considerably high degree of politeness. Therefore it would not be because JI underestimated the required level of politeness in this situation. It would be probably that the learners who chose those expressions may have estimated the level of politeness the expressions could convey higher than the native speakers did, and/or it may be the reflection of the limitation of the subjects' grammatical competence.

Speaking of grammatical competence, the linguistic forms JI employed, in both the professor situation and the friend situation, were limited in three of the five categories (interrogatives, expressions of personal desire, and please + imperative) and the one listed as 'others', which was an expression of obligation:

You should leave my paper to the department secretary (JI-6).

All these expressions could be completed by a linguistic formula often taught in Japanese English classes (e.g. can you ---?, would you mind ---?) plus the act the speaker wants the addressee to perform. The other types of utterance, conditionals and 'I was wondering if ---' allow a wider variety of expressions to be followed to the formulaic portion and involve more decisions and choices of linguistic structures:

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1. I wonder if you wouldn't mind leaving the paper with the department secretary. (AE-7: to professor)
2. I was wondering if it was possible for you to leave it with your department secretary. (AE-13: to friend)
3. If you can leave it at the secretary's office, that would be wonderful. (AE-6: to professor)
4. If it's possible and easy for you, you can leave it with my department secretary. (AE-4: to professor)

Tables 3 and 4 show the use of modals in interrogative expressions to professors and close friends respectively.

	AE	JA	JI
Would you mind---?	1	2	2
Would you---?	0	6	0
Could you---?	2	2	8
Will you---?	0	1	0
Can you---?	0	0	1
	3	10	11

Table 3
The frequency of the use of modals in interrogatives in the professor situation

	AE	JA	JI
Would you mind---?	0	2	1
Would you---?	0	3	1
Could you---?	3	1	4
Will you---?	0	2	0
Can you---?	1	1	3
	4	8	9

Table 4
The frequency of the use of the modals in the friend situation

Even though the size of the data is small, there is a noticeable tendency that AE and JI preferred 'could you ---?', while JA preferred 'would you ---?'. The reason for this is unknown. It may be because JI depended on the formula that they felt were 'safe', while JA was exploring the possibility of other expressions as well.

The other interesting difference among the groups is the use of 'please' and 'just'. Of the three interrogatives in the professor situation in AE, one was accompanied with 'please' (could you please ---?) and one with 'just' (could you just ---?). In the friend situation, of the five interrogatives, two used the modifiers (one 'please' and one 'just'). As for JA, there were 10 interrogatives in the professor situation, and three 'would you ---?' and one 'will you ---?' utterances were modified by 'please' following right after them. The use of 'just' was relatively less common than that of 'please' among JA, and there was only one instance that used it (could you just ---?). In the friend situation, out of eight interrogatives, only one each accompanied 'please' and 'just' ('will you please ---?' and 'would you just ---?'). No one in AE and JA used both 'please' and 'just' in an utterance. In JI, either 'please' or 'just' was never used for the interrogatives in their 11 interrogatives in the professor situation or in the 9 interrogatives in the friend situation. One possible explanation for this is that the number of politeness strategy JI could use in an utterance was smaller than AE and JA. It could be also that JI's understanding of the

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pragmatic forces of 'please' and 'just' were different from those of AE and JA. Further studies are necessary.

The subjects sometimes modified their main linguistic structures for request by inserting a conditional phrase such as 'if you have time'; all groups had four subjects who did so for the professor situation, while one in AE and four in JA and JI for the friend situation. JA and JI always located such phrases either at the top or the end of the utterance, but AE sometimes added them in the middle of the utterances.

The use of subjunctives also showed difference across the groups. In the professor situation, each group had the same number of the subjects who produced the request only with subjunctives. That means if the requesting part consisted of two phrases, both of them were subjunctive phrases. Ten out of 15 subjects employed only subjunctive phrases
for requesting. In the friend situation, the number of 'subjunctive-only requesting' decreased, and only five of both JA and JI chose to do so. On the other hand, 11 AE subjects employed subjunctive-only requesting in the friend situation. In Experiment 2, JA and JI had a tendency to accept less polite expressions to their friends than they did to their professors. AE also had the same tendency, but it was not to the same extent. The result shown on Table 5 may reflect such perception of JA and JI in American English. To JA and JI, the difference of the nature of required politeness between the two situations may be much larger than to AE. Also, it may have been the main strategy for JA and JI to elevate the level of politeness. In other words, JA and JI relied more heavily on the use of subjunctives in making their utterances more polite than AE.

AE	professor	friend
subjunctive	10	11
non-subjunctive	2	2
mixed	3	2

JA	professor	friend
subjunctive	10	5
non-subjunctive	4	9
mixed	1	1

JI	professor	friend
subjunctive	10	5
non-subjunctive	4	10
mixed	1	0

Table 5
The use of subjunctives in the professor situation and the friend situation

Some previous studies claim that impersonalization be a strategy that is rarely employed by ESL learners (e.g. Scarcella and Brunak 1981). The claim holds some truth with the subjects in this study, too. In AE, six subjects employed the strategy in the professor situation and one in the friend situation. The strategy seems to be for the effect of high degree of politeness as in the professor situation. For Japanese subjects, that was not necessarily the case; one JA subject in the friend situation and two JI subjects in each situation employed it. It means that the strategy was not absent in JA and JI, but that it was not employed very often.

Finally, another characteristic of Japanese subjects was the repetition of the request in different forms; some of the JA and JI repeated the message twice or sometimes even more. In JA, one subject in the professor situation and two in the friend situation repeated the request twice. As for

JI, two in the professor situation and three in the friend situation repeated two to four times. This probably reflects their concern as to whether their intention would be fully understood. In that sense, it could be said that they were concerned with the maxim of manner more than the maxim of quantity (Levinson 1983)5. Repetition was observed also in apologizing, telling that the subject had to cancel the appointment, telling that getting the paper back was important for them and saying 'thank you' to close the message.

Conclusion

This study has examined Japanese ESL learners' perception and production of politeness, especially in relation to their knowledge of Discernment. Although there were a number of cases in which the Japanese ESL learners and the native speakers were similar, there were also cases where differences between them were obvious. In Experiment 1, Japanese ESL learners transferred their L1 knowledge of Discernment to the target. They were very sensitive to the addressee's age especially when he/she was a much older acquaintance. On the other hand, their sensitivity to the familiarity factor seemed not to be enough in some cases. In Experiment 2, the variety of the politeness Japanese ESL learners thought they could use for the friends was wider; the subjects responded that they could use very polite expressions as well as the least polite ones. The native speakers also showed the similar tendency and refrained more from the least polite expressions. Also, Japanese ESL learners' perception of politeness in some expressions seemed to be different from that of the native speakers. In the production task in Experiment 3, the causes of the learners' difference from the native speakers were not always clear. However, some reasons seemed to be attributable to the difference in the rules the learners perceived in American English, and some were probably due to their lack of grammatical sophistication.

The effects of L2 proficiency was not very simple. The advanced learners were not always closer to the native speakers than the intermediate learners in their judgment. In some cases, as in the impact of the age factor, the advanced learners were closer to the native speakers. However, in some cases, as in the comparisons of the situation with a middle-aged stranger on the street and the clerk and waiter/waitress situations, the intermediate learners were closer to the native speakers. There could be several possible explanations for this. One such possibility is that the advanced learners once had a rule that was closer to the native speakers but gave up temporarily to test other possibilities. Or the strategy the intermediate learners employed happened to lead them to the native speakers' rule in some cases. It is also possible there is not much difference between the advanced learners and the intermediate learners in the level of pragmatic competence.

As for production, the advanced learners seemed to be more sophisticated. They employed linguistic forms and strategies the intermediate learners did not have. However, in terms of the use of modals, the intermediate learners were often closer to the native speakers. It may be because the advanced learners were on the process of reinterpreting the pragmatic force of modals and exploring the possible uses of them, while the intermediate learners used them as a part of formulae they had learned in class.

It is said that there has not been enough research on the effect of L2 proficiency (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993), and it is difficult to give a systematic description of how pragmatic proficiency develops, and how the development of pragmatic competence is related to L2 proficiency. To fill this gap, future studies are awaited.

NOTES

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1 This experiment is an adaptation of Hill et al. (1986) with some revision to have it fit for a second language study.

2 This kind of rating involves an ordinal scale, which does not presuppose the equality of intervals between points on the scale. That means, unlike test scores or frequencies, it is not accurate to say, for example, that difference of politeness between the situations rated 1 and 3 is the same as that of 8 and 10. Likewise it is not necessarily true that the situation rated 5 is half as polite as the situation rated 10. For the data involving the ordinal scale, therefore, the mathematical procedures such as adding or subtracting are not appropriate (Butler 1985; 105), thus, means are not accurate indicators of the property of this type of data. However, they are presented here because it provides us with an overall picture of the distribution of the situations on the scale. It should be also remembered that the inter-group comparison of the ratings is not meaningful, because the standard of rating may be different across the groups; that is, the same score may not mean the same degree of politeness.

3 To examine the distribution pattern of the situations on the scale, the sign test was employed, which measures the significance of the difference of two variables when the data use the ordinal scale. It can be used only for the comparison of intra-group variables and cannot be applicable for the inter-group comparison. Here, we can compare, for instance, 'm' and 'o' of English rated by the subjects in JA, but cannot discuss the difference between 'm's of English rated by the JA and AE subjects.

4 As in Experiment 1, the data analyzed here also involve the ordinal data. That means that average is not a very accurate measurement to handle this type of data. Understanding the limitation, average will be presented again in order to show an overall picture of the relationship between the levels of politeness of the nine utterances.

5 Kasper (1989) discusses this issue in terms of verbosity of L2 learners.

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